

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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15th Annual Martin Luther King Oratory Contest To Be Held in City Hall Council Chambers Commemorative Event Sponsored by Bank of America

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, members of the **Municipal Council**, and the **Dept. of Health & Human Services/Division of Cultural Affairs** will host the final round of the **15th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratory Contest** at 3 p.m. on **Tuesday, February 23, 2010** at **City Hall, 280 Grove Street**.

“The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratory Contest is a great opportunity for our children to learn about Dr. Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement,” **Mayor Healy** said. “This is one example as to how they can celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and recognize his continued influence in our culture, society and the political landscapes.”

Grades 3-5 competed on Tuesday, February 16, while grades 6-8 competed on Thursday, February. Following the final competition, Mayor Healy and Ed Montesdeoca, Consumer Market Executive, Hudson Bergen Market of Bank of America will present an award to the top orators.

“By learning and reciting Dr. King’s historic words, Jersey City youth develop important skills that can be applied both in the classroom and later in life,” said **Ed Montesdeoca**. “Our support of this initiative is a reflection of Bank of America’s commitment to education in the communities we serve.”

This year, Bank of America has sponsored the entire **15th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratory Contest**. Their contribution of \$1,700.00, will go towards the six top award recipients with US Saving Bonds and trophies and the six honorable mentions will receive plaques and books. In addition, Bank of America will also provide refreshments as well as an announcement ad in the local newspaper announcing this year’s winners.

“Bank of America’s generous contribution provides the opportunity for children not only to embrace Dr. King’s legacy, but also helps them to develop strong public speaking skills which will be an asset for them in the future,” said **Mayor Healy**. “Bank of America’s sponsorship is critical to our city’s needs as they help us provide a venue in which our children can learn and development both socially and academically. I am grateful for their support and for their help in engaging and educating the community in which they serve.”

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The contestants, who compete in two grade categories – the grade 3 to 5 group and the grade 6 to 8 group – must memorize and present an original work of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which is judged by representatives of the business community.

Each year, public, private and charter schools across the city are notified of the contest, and asked to hold an internal selection process in which they send two students to compete in each grade category.

The oration must be memorized and no longer than 10 minutes. Each presentation will be judged according to length, clarity, memorization, and overall presentation.

Approximately 80 students will participate in the City Hall contest, with twelve students making it to the final round of competition.

The following prizes will be awarded by Mayor Healy to the top students in each of the two categories:

- 1st Prize -- \$500 savings bond
- 2nd Prize -- \$250 savings bond
- 3rd Prize -- \$100 savings bond
- Honorable Mention -- a book of Martin Luther King's original works

All of the awards are provided by Bank of America, who has sponsored the event for the past eight years. The Oratory Contest is one element of the Division of Cultural Affairs' month-long tribute to African-American history and culture as the City celebrates Black History Month.

Other events include the **Black History Month Group Show** being held through the end of the month in City Hall's John W. Meagher Rotunda Gallery. The exhibit is free and open to the public and is handicap accessible. The show, which is curated by City Hall Art Curator Greg Brickey, will run through the end of this month. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, **contact the Division of Cultural Affairs at 201-547-6921.**///